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know, all one thing or the other—either full of enthusiasm and lyric frenzy, or of the worst of disdain, that which is founded on indifference and forgetfulness. As I pen these lines the Russian sailors who have been visiting us have just taken their departure. Paris, during their stay, presented an amazing spectacle—that of an entire population which, in its delirious joy, would have, if it could, stifled the whole Russian fleet in the warmth of its affectionate embrace. Our guests have left us charmed, indeed, but fairly worn out by such intense welcome. We seldom keep within bounds.

Once it was settled here that the Chicago Exposition was a fiasco, and a terrible one, it was as if it had never been; nobody spoke of it. Poor Heller and his companions, who returned from America full of warmest admiration, coming into this chill, sceptical Parisian atmosphere, felt like men who from a hot vapor-bath plunge into ice-cold water.

"You come back, then, enchanted?" I asked.

"Enchanted? Yes; but also somewhat anxious. Those people, you know, are going to devour us. No doubt of it. They work on a larger scale and at lower rates."

"You speak," I said, "merely from an industrial point of view. Our old Europe must always retain an artistic superiority, greater refinement of taste. You, who are so delicate and finished an artist, can least fail to see this."

"Well, even on this point I do not feel so secure. They have formed their taste. We can no longer ship to them our shop remnants, as of old. In furniture and in jewelry, in all that concerns the art of ornamentation, they are learning to appreciate fine lines; they are fast becoming excellent judges. But the most wonderful thing among them is that, thanks to the power and perfection of their machinery, they can reproduce at will the purest and most elegant models."

While conversing thus, we were breakfasting. In my dining-room is a buffet in Henri II. style, the work of Sauvrezey. This artist, who died a few years ago, was one of the first cabinet-makers of our day, a sort of crank, who ruined himself by manufacturing perfect articles which he could not always dispose of, as he had to charge exorbitant prices for them. I remember discussing with him the price of a wardrobe which I considered too costly for my purse. He showed me the back of it.

"Look!" said he pointing to some letters cut into the wood.

"It is your name," I answered. "What of it?"

"Sir," said he, "this article is signed!" Then, stepping back two steps and pointing his index toward me, he added: "With this signature you can, two hundred years hence, sell it for ten times what it cost you!"

The prospect was certainly alluring. Yet I feared that I might have to wait too long to get my money back, and I bought only the buffet. Heller examined it en connoisseur.

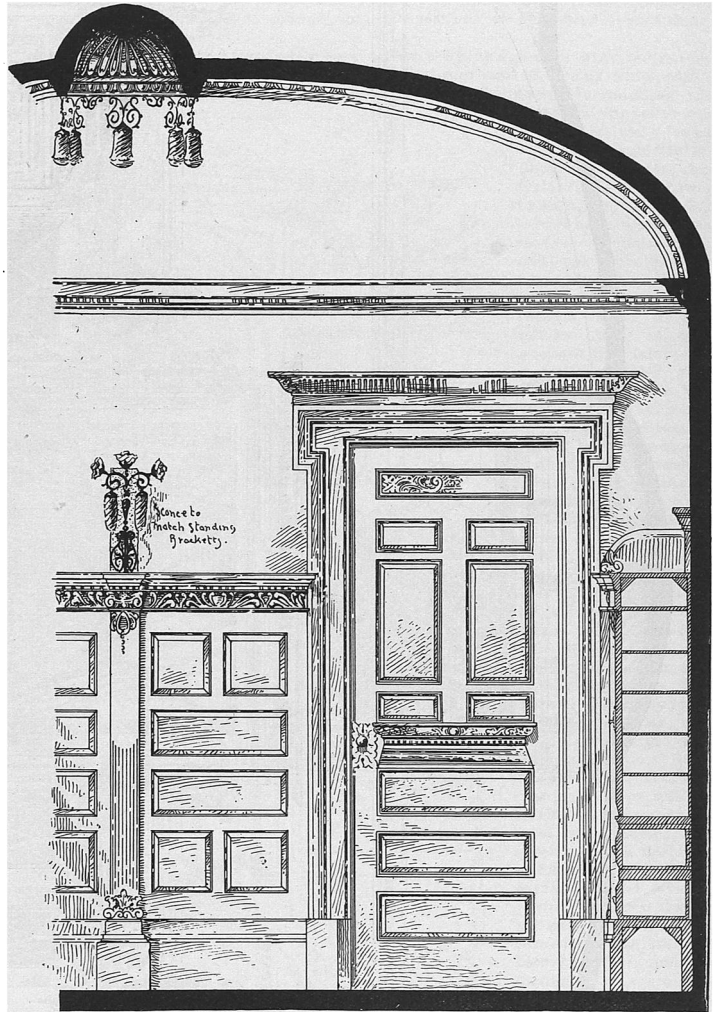
"Well," he said, "I know more than one establishment in New York which, once in possession of this piece of furniture, would sell you dozens, nay, if you wished it hundreds, thousands of copies of it, at a low rate—all cut, shaped and carved by machinery."

"What? Even the carvings in the solid wood?" I asked.

"Yes. Of course they would not have the finish of yours, that plainly shows the hand of the artist himself. But, short of examining them closely, you would yourself be deceived. We were, all of us, amazed and really dismayed at this extraordinary power of reproduction. I do not know whether the government will publish the reports we are going to send it, each of us for his section. If you read them, you will detect in them all a mingled feeling of wonder and anxiety. We are overwhelmed

by the grandeur of their conceptions, by the vastness of establishments which start up on that soil in one night, as it were, like prodigious mushrooms. Doubtless, you know and have admired the Petit Journal printing-presses, patented by Marinoni. You should see those of the New York Herald! It is as if one compared the Seine and the Amazon river! Such monstrous engines, moving with such ease and perfection, really confound the imagination."

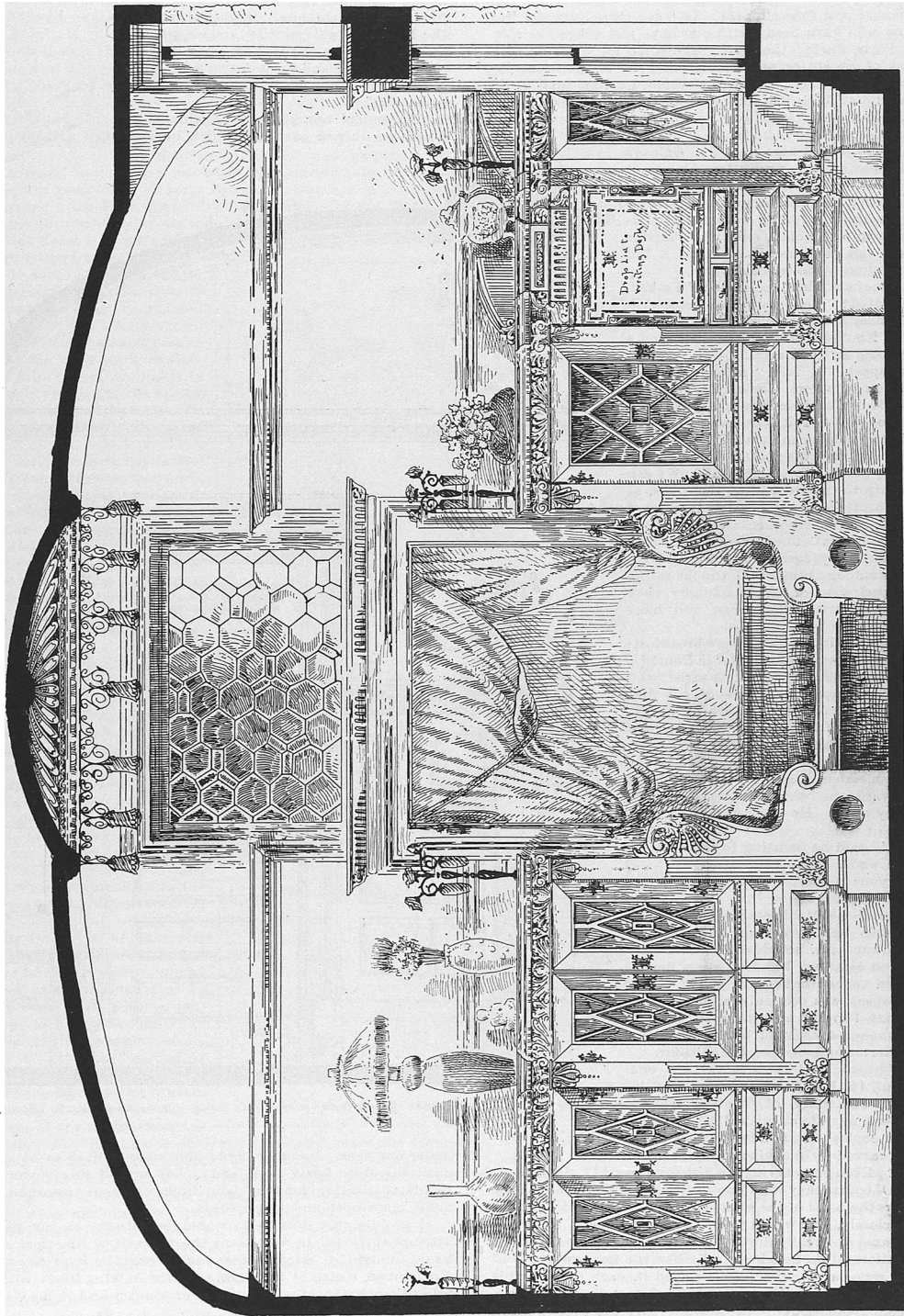
Heller had brought several albums of photographic views, which we turned over and which he explained as they passed



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under our eyes. He grew more and more excited as he spoke, until his voice fairly rang, and I felt myself slowly won over to his admiration for that land from which he returned with mind more open and larger ideas.

I avoid giving details—it would be fatuous on my part to attempt to reveal to Americans the marvels of America. But I have thought it might please you to read the impressions of a Frenchman, a man of taste and an artist, talking freely with another Frenchman of matters in your country and of the Chicago Exposition.—*The Cosmopolitan*.



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